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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 001848

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TAGS: PGOV PREL KPKO SU JA

SUBJECT: JAPAN "CAREFULLY CONSIDERING" CONTRIBUTION TO  
DARFUR

REF: STATE 51778

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer. Reasons 1.4 b/d.

¶1. (C) The demarche on support for a UN peacekeeping operation in Darfur (State 51778) was conveyed to MOFA on April 3. First Middle East Division's Jun Nanazawa on April 6 responded that, following consultations within the Foreign Ministry, Japan has decided to wait and consider the Secretary General's plan for transition, as well as the

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situation on the ground and developments in peace talks, before making any final decisions on contributions to Darfur.

¶2. (C) Nanazawa outlined Japan's three-point position. First, Japan has already been a generous contributor to Darfur, donating emergency or humanitarian assistance of around \$40 million over the past two years, in addition to vehicles and other equipment for the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS). Japan is committed to continuing to provide assistance to Darfur, he stated. Second, Japan plans to examine the Secretary General's options and plans for a UN peacekeeping force, due to be presented to the UN Security Council by April 24, before making any firm commitments. It will also consider the state of peace talks in Abuja at that time, as well as the state of discussions on the transition from AMIS to a UN PKO. Japan will take an especially close look at the financial aspects/obligations of the SYG's report, Nanazawa said. Finally, Nanazawa stated that it is too early to commit to any dispatch of Self-Defense Forces (SDF) for a UN PKO, adding that Japan will take into account the situation on the ground, the existence of any agreement among the parties, and the conditions affecting support systems the SDF would rely on. He also noted that while in principle Japan may participate in this UN PKO, it will also have to consider the role of the mission within the context of Japanese law.

¶3. (C) Comment. A contact in MOFA's Security Policy Division, who is unusually -- in the Japanese context -- frank and straightforward, told Poloff directly that sending SDF to a UN PKO in Darfur "would be difficult" (i.e., next to impossible) given the political energy required to dispatch the SDF overseas. He hinted that the low visibility of the Darfur issue within the Japanese public makes it hard to envision how politicians would overcome the numerous obstacles to an SDF dispatch. Another contact in MOFA's UN Policy Division essentially agreed, saying Japan, which is trying to obtain a permanent seat on the Security Council, is conscious of the need to show it is qualified to be a permanent UN Security Council member. At the same time, however, Japan's pacifist constitution "is a huge constraint" on how the SDF can participate in a UN PKO mission,

particularly in a place where the security situation is as volatile as Darfur. Post assesses that while a modest dispatch of SDF troops for humanitarian assistance might not be out of the question, it is more likely that Japan will contribute equipment or financial assistance.

SCHIEFFER